CALPEEK

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ENERGY & POLITICS: **NEW L.A. TIMES POLL GIVES DAVIS FAIRLY GOOD MARKS. BUSH TAKES A HIT.**

Editor's note: A fax memo from Garry South, Gov. Gray Davis' chief political strategist, perhaps best describes the latest polling data from the L.A. Times on the governor's performance during the State's ***energy crisis***. "Despite all the bitching and obituaries, Gov. Gray Davis is doing just fine, thank you, during the current power crisis. His critics, however, be they on the West Coast or the East Coast, don't fare nearly so well." Vintage South. Here's our report & analysis...

...That really does sum up the latest L.A. Times survey, taken among 579 Californians, Feb. 14-15. Here's how the polling looks for Davis, Pres. George W. Bush & his administration, the CA Legislature, the IOUs (SCE/PG&E) and the Calif.'s PUC:

	Approve	Disapprove
Gov. Davis	49%	37%
Pres. Bush + Admin.	33%	44%
Calif. Legislature	28%	51%
IOUs	19%	67%
CA PUC	16%	60%

...Looking at some other numbers in this latest LAT poll, the IOUs are still in the PR dog house with Californians. To the question, "Do you personally believe there is an actual shortage of electricity in Calif.?, **57%** say there is ***NO shortage***. That's up 3-pts. from January. And while the CA Legislature doesn't do well in this new poll, the public seems to approve of several new bills, including a law that allows for ***higher rates*** for residential consumers of IOUs who use more than 130% of their baseline/minimum power allowance. It's 55% YES vs. 39% NO, with 6% undecided...

...The poll shows Californians favor the State buying either hydroelectric power plants from PG&E and SCE (56% approve) or buying the power grid (power lines) from the IOUs: 52% approve vs. 36% disapprove. But Californians are opposed to Gov. Davis' plan to have the State sell $10 billion in bonds to buy electricity, which is then sold to PG&E and SCE. Only 37% approve vs. 50% disapprove...

...Finally: "Some people say that these measures are a ***bailout*** of the IOUs. Do you agree or disagree?" Agree **76%** vs. Disagree **15%**, with **9%** don't know. Seems like the Davis Admin. needs to hit the road with a solid dog & pony show to explain what's going on. Oddly enough, despite this being considered a bailout, **53%** of those questioned said a bailout was necessary...

...FYI: Sources tell **Calpeek** that Gov. Davis will soon name a Calif. Secretary of Energy – a new cabinet post. And the question of the week: where is former Calif. PUC Chairman Daniel Fessler? Reporters have been looking for him, but no luck. Stay tuned...

THE VIGNALI PARDON: **THE NEVER ENDING STORY.**

Editor's note: The news that Pres. Bill Clinton's brother-in-law, attorney Hugh Rodham, received a huge fee for helping in the pardon process of convicted cocaine trafficker Carlos Vignali Jr. is just another indication this story has *longer legs* than all the chorus girls at Caesar's Palace. Here is **Calpeek's** analysis & commentary...

...While the Marc Rich pardon is getting more ink & airtime than the Vignali affair, the Los Angeles angle to this pardon fiasco for former Pres. Bill Clinton is beginning to catch up because it could impact the current L.A. Mayor's race. The story of the Vignali pardon was first exposed by the *L.A. Times*, but there have now been stories in the NY Times and on NBC-TV's *Meet The Press* as well as *Fox News Channel*. The LAT has run a different angle to this same story for almost 10 days running and because of the link to the mayor's race, it's a sexy story for local tv news. And remember: it's sweeps time for the tv stations...

...Both U.S. Rep. Xavier Becerra(D) and former Demo Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa are running for mayor and both contacted the Clinton Admin. on behalf of Vignali after being lobbied by Vignali's well connected father, Horacio. And yes, both Becerra and Villaraigosa received campaign contributins from the elder Vignali. Of the two, Villaraigosa has the better chance of perhaps making the June 5th

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runoff. He has apologized for his actions and said he was wrong not to check things out in this case. Indeed, as one source said: "I don't understand how come so many intelligent people wrote letters (for Vignali) without checking the facts." That's a question with only one answer: Horacio Vignali was very generous with this checkbook…

…Will any of Becerra's and Villaraigosa's mayoral rivals hit them for their part in the Vignali pardon? For now, L.A. City Atty. Jim Hahn, Controller Kathleen Connell, L.A. Councilman Joel Wachs and businessman Steve Soboroff are sitting on their hands. No need to push a story which already has *momentum* and is considered a negative for both Villaraigosa and Becerra. But bet your first born, the campaign teams for all of the Big 6 candidates are watching very carefully – and are probably polling right now…

…In addition to Becerra and Villaraigosa, others now caught up in the Vignali pardon include Demo Assembly Speaker Bob Hertzberg, State Sen. Richard Polanco(D), L.A. Co. Sup. Gloria Molina and L.A. Councilman Mike Hernandez. Hertzberg's letter was sent to the White House on Dec. 7th of last year…

…***The Mayorkas angle.*** Mayorkas in this case is U.S. Attorney Alejandros N. Mayorkas, HQed in L.A. He was nominated to his post in December of 1998 at the recommendation of U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein. **Calpeek** sources say DiFi was lobbied to nominate Mayorkas to this DOJ post by many of the same people in the Latino community who are involved in the Vignali pardon. On NBC-TV's *Meet the Press*, former White House COS John Podesta *confirmed* it was Mayorkas who supported the Vignali commutation. Earlier stories said that Pres. Clinton based his decision to free Vignali from his 15-year prison sentence at the request from an unnamed "federal prosecutor." Vignali was tried in Minnesota, not L.A., so Mayorkas' intervention has raised eyebrows. Stay tuned…

CAMPAIGN 2001: **UPDATE ON L.A. MAYOR'S RACE.**
Editor's note: Last week **Calpeek** focused on three major endorsements in the April 10th L.A. Mayor's race. In 2 of the 3 battles over the endorsements, it was a tug of war between former Demo Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa and L.A. City Atty. Jim Hahn. The 3rd key endorsement went to L.A. Councilman Joel Wachs. And it is Wachs who we will focus on this week, especially his running battle with L.A. Parks Comm. and Riordan ally Steve Soboroff. Here is our update & analysis…

…Of the ***Big 6*** candidates running for L.A. Mayor, there are numerous sets of rivalries: U.S. Rep. Xavier Becerra vs. Villaraigosa; Villaraigosa vs. Hahn; Controller Kathleen Connell vs. all 5 male candidates; and Soboroff vs. Wachs. Depending upon whom one talks to, you can get a different spin on which candidates make the June 5th runoff. But one thing seems clear as of now: in two recent surveys which **Calpeek** has seen, Wachs is leading in both. In his own poll of 800 likely voters taken in January by Paul Goodwin of GLS Research, Wachs leads the field with 18%. In the Connell survey of 600 likely voters taken Feb. 1-4, Wachs leads with 20% (followed by Connell with 18%, Hahn 15%, Villaraigosa 13%, Becerra 8%, Soboroff 6%)…

…For those who are unaware, Wachs was a registered GOPer for many years and then switched several years ago to become an independent. Despite the switch, Wachs is still viewed as a strong fiscal conservative and is noted as a budget *watchdog*. And this plays extremely well with L.A. City's 324,000 GOP voters, as well as with the 214,386 independents…

…Of the Big 6 candidates, Soboroff is the only registered GOPer. Problem is you'd never know it because he has done little or nothing to contact his GOP base. According to one source, "This guy is in a runoff if he ever gets a handle on the Republican vote." His biggest problem, of course, is Wachs – who recently solidified his standing with GOPers by winning the endorsement of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Assn. And while Soboroff does have the endorsement of L.A. Mayor Richard Riordan, the best known GOP elected leader in Calif., polling suggests that the HJTA endorsement offsets Riordan's endorsement. In the Wachs survey, 33% have a favorable impression of HJTA vs. 32% for Riordan…

…As for Wachs vs. Soboroff among GOP voters, the Wachs poll shows Soboroff running 7 points *behind* Wachs among GOPers and running 4 points *behind* Hahn. And among Jewish voters, Wachs leads Soboroff by a margin of 32% to 14.5%…

…FYI: As **Calpeek** noted last week, Wachs hired savvy GOP media consultant Don Sipple to do tv for his campaign. In addition to Sipple, Wachs also added prominent Hollywood producer Gary Goetzman (co-owner with Tom Hanks of *PlayTone Production*). Sipple has positives and negatives. He's worked for George W. Bush, Pete Wilson and Bob Dole. He also did work for former CA Insur. Commissioner Chuck Quackenbush and Sipple's name surfaced during the Quackenbush probe last year. Hard to tell if any of Wachs' rivals will spend money bashing Sipple, but they'll probably mention it a time or two at public forums. Remember the 1994 Wilson tv ad, "*They Just Keep Coming*"?, about illegal immigrants? That was Sipple. But even some of Sipple's Demo rivals admit he's very good. Stay tuned…

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***24TH SD SPECIAL UPDATE*: GALLEGOS VS. ROMERO.**
Editor's note: This special election primary to replace new U.S. Rep. Hilda Solis(D) takes place Mar. 6th, with the winner in a May 1st runoff. Here's our update & analysis…

…The 24th Senate District is definitely Demo turf. The two leading Demo contenders are former Assemblyman Martin Gallegos and current Assemblywoman Gloria Romero. The lone GOPer is Vince House and there is a Libertarian candidate as well. In just this past week, Gallegos received the endorsement of Gov. Gray Davis(D), while Romero got L.A. Co. Labor's COPE endorsement (on the 7th ballot). Despite COPE's backing, Gallegos still has solid labor support. He's won backing from both the L.A. Co. SEIU 660 local, as well as the big L.A. City SEIU 347 local. He's also won the endorsement of Laborers Local #300…

…Many observers see the Demo race as very close and some liken this Demo primary struggle to the 2000 primary battle between Demo Assemblymembers Jack Scott and Scott Wildman – who represented adjoining districts within the 21st Senate District. Scott was viewed as a "work horse," while Wildman was noted for his aggressiveness and was viewed as a "race horse." Some see Gallegos as the "Jack Scott" in this battle…

…Both campaigns have active field operations, which include phone banks. As of deadline time, Romero had sent out at least 5 pieces of mail vs. 1 for Gallegos. And both have polled. A benchmark poll by Romero's campaign way back in April of 2000 showed Romero ahead of Gallegos by a margin of **37%** to **23%**. The poll was taken by Paul Goodwin of GLS Research. Nine months later another GLS survey of 400 voters (Jan. 24-28) shows almost the same thing: Romero **36%** to **26%** for Gallegos; GOPer Vince House gets **14%** and **23%** are undecided. That's the most recent polling…

…In terms of fundraising, in the reports dated 1/25/01, Romero had $248,591 cash on hand vs. $198,954 for Gallegos. Both sides will probably get lots of help from independent expenditure committees. For example, the COPE endorsement for Romero means that her good friend, Miguel Contreras, head of the L.A. Co. Federation of Labor, will undoubtedly use his IE funds to back Romero. FYI: On Feb. 26th, Demo State Senators Alarcon, Polanco, Escutia, Murray, Perata, Soto and Vincent, along with Assemblymembers Calderon, Cardenas, Cedillo, Chavez, Correa, Firebaugh, Florez & Reyes will host a $1,000 per/person fundraiser for Gallegos at the Sutter Club in Sacto. Stay tuned…

***CAMPAIGN 2001*: THE L.A. CITY COUNCIL PRIMARIES**
Editor's note: This week **Calpeek** will focus on two more L.A. City Council primary battles. The primary is April 10th, with a runoff June 5th. The **odd numbered** seats are up for grabs…

☒ ***1st District*** – HOT NEWS. This is the East L.A. seat now held by Councilman Mike Hernandez, who is *termed out*. This was one of the higher profile council battles because powerful State Sen. Richard Polanco(D) was all set to run here. But on 2/21 Polanco suddenly ***dropped out***. Despite great name ID and a ton of money, Polanco may have had to fight hard because in addition to friends, he's also made enemies – such as L.A. Co. Sup. Gloria Molina, U.S. Rep. Lucille Roybal Allard(D) and L.A. Councilman Nick Pacheco. Sources expected most of these anti-Polanco leaders to line up with Ed Reyes, former COS and planning deputy to Hernandez. With Polanco out, Reyes becomes the frontrunner. The other key Demo in this race is F. Robert Nakahiro, who is a Demo Party activist and a member of the L.A. Co. Demo Central Cmt…

…The big question is whether some of Polanco's enemies in Sacramento were prepared to wade in with a heavy and nasty negative campaign? Polanco's chief enemy in the Capital is the CCPOA – prison guards – and they have the resources to make Polanco pay. Big time!!!

☒ ***3rd District*** – This is Councilwoman Laura Chick's West Valley district, which is up because Chick is *termed out* and running for Controller. She's neutral in this battle which features 3 serious contenders in the top tier. They are: Judith Hirshberg, former aide to Mayor Bradley and Councilman Marvin Braude; Francine Oschin, current aide to Councilman Hal Bernson; and Dennis Zine, a policeman (and a LAPPL director) and elected member of the L.A. City Charter Reform Commission. Many well known Demos, the L.A. Co. Demo Central Cmt. and NOW are with Hirshberg. Oschin is the best funded: $110,792 cash on hand vs. $57,799 for Hirshberg and $38,604 for Zine. Oschin's support includes L.A. Mayor Richard Riordan, Assemblyman Paul Koretz(D), 3 councilmembers (including her boss Hal Bernson), plus the Sierra Club and the L.A. League of Conservation Voters. Riordan won the 3rd District twice so his endorsement is very helpful to Oschin…

…Zine's backers include Koretz and Bernson (duel endorsements), Ed Davis and Steve Soboroff. Given Zine's links to labor, it was somewhat surprising that the COPE endorsement went open. Remember: COPE endorsed Zine when he ran for the L.A. Charter Reform Commission a few years

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ago. But Zine has strong backing from his own L.A. Police Protective League, as well as from the L.A. City Firefighters and SEIU #347. A fourth candidate, Tsilah Burman is a former aide to U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman, but when it comes to money, she's not close to the top tier. There are two other lesser known candidates as well. No OJT necessary for the eventual winner, as Oschin, Hirshberg and Zine know the drill. Toss up. Stay tuned…

CALPEEK'S CALENDAR OF POLITICAL EVENTS

Feb. 25-27	Sacramento Seminar.
Feb. 27	Burbank city election.
Mar. 6	60 municipal elections, mostly L.A. County; 24th SD Special election primary.
Mar. 9-13	Nat'l League of Cities Congressional Cities Conference, Washington DC.
Mar. 30-Apr. 1	CA Democratic Party convention @ Anaheim Convention Center.

CALPEEK'S INFOBAHN; POLITICAL SHORT TAKES.
Editor's note: Here are a few items, political & otherwise, worth noting…

■ ***32nd CD Update*** – Filing closes Feb. 26th for this special election to fill the seat of the late Julian Dixon(D-L.A.). Biggest piece of news this past week was that State Sen. Kevin Murray(D-Culver City) got the L.A. Co. Federation of Labor's COPE endorsement on the 2nd ballot. There was an attempt to keep the COPE endorsement open. Murray is vying for the 32nd CD seat against former State Sen. Diane Watson and L.A. Councilman Nate Holden. The only other thing which was somewhat confusing was a statement in the *L.A.* Times attributed to U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters(D). She said: "Past grudges will be put aside. We are looking for the best candidate to run." Everyone knows that Waters and Watson have been bitter rivals. And for a number of weeks it was suspected that Waters was working on Murray's behalf. Has something changed???

■ ***Arnold the Barbarian*** – That's the title of an article in the March 2001 issue of *Premier*. This article by John Connolly is about Arnold Schwarzenegger, who is perhaps looking at a possible run for statewide office in Calif. in 2002. But after reading Connolly's article, GOPers may think twice about flirting with Schwarzenegger. This is not a flattering story…

■ ***Update on L.A. Controller's Race*** – L.A. Councilwoman Laura Chick got very lucky when rival J. Paul Brownridge failed to turn in sufficient signatures to qualify for the April 10th primary ballot. Happens every election cycle, without fail. Brownridge was on his way to court to try and get on the ballot as **Calpeek** hit deadline…

■ ***Power lines & Property Taxes*** – If the State moves ahead and buys the power grid from PG&E and SCE, what happens to local property taxes when the State takes over the ownership? When the ownership is shifted, the land on which the power lines are situation goes off the property tax rolls – and local governments say this could cost them as much as $50 million per year in lost revenue. Are we looking at another backfill situation???

■ ***CA's Tauscher New DLC Vice Chair*** – U.S. Rep. Ellen Tauscher(D-10th CD) has been elected to the 2001 Democratic Leadership Council's new slate of officers. Tauscher is the vice chair. U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh of Indiana is the new chair. Bayh succeeds U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman of CT, the DLC leader for the last 6 years…

CALPEEK'S NEW JOBS AND PERSONNEL NOTICES.
Editor's note: Here are some items to mark down in your notebook…

● A sad note: former Assemblyman and Congressman Victor Veysey(R) died Feb. 13th. He was 85 and lived in the Imperial Valley. R.I.P…

● U.S. Rep. Doug Ose(R-Sacto) will chair the House Govt. Reform Cmt.'s subcommittee on Energy Policy, Natural Resources & Regulatory Affairs…

● Sacto attorney Thomas S. Knox has been appointed to the FPPC by SOS Bill Jones…

● U.S. Rep. Duncan Hunter(R-El Cajon) will chair the House Armed Services subcommittee on R&D…

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● **Environmental organization seeks** Program Director. Strong advocate leads issue campaigns and manages policy staff to protect and restore San Francisco Bay-Delta. Legislative director experience preferred. Competitive salary/benefits. See position description at www.savesfbay.org or call (510)452-9261.

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